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ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the nature of the activities, processes, and structures used to link a teacher evaluation program to professional growth and motivation. A total of 52 teachers in the Johnson City (Tennessee) School District were selected by both random and purposeful sampling techniques to participate. Data were collected through quantitative and qualitative methods. Principals of the nine schools involved also participated in the naturalistic inquiry component of the study. Analysis of data revealed attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions of those involved in the implementation of a growth-oriented approach to teacher evaluation. The study identified critical elements within four major categories that influence the linking of teacher evaluation, professional growth, and motivation. The four major categories are: characteristics of the culture, characteristics of the administrator, characteristics of the teachers, and characteristics of the process. The critical elements were identified as follows: (1) a culture characterized by a trusting environment, collaborative relationships, and high expectations of growth; (2) administrators who are facilitators or coaches and resource providers; (3) teachers who are mature, responsible, and self-directed; and (4) a continuous process that is individualized, formative, and structured. (Contains 23 references.) (Author/ND)

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LINKING TEACHER EVALUATION, PROFESSIONAL GROWTH, AND MOTIVATION: A MULTIPLE-SITE CASE STUDY

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Dr. Marie S. Hill

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Running Head: TEACHER EVALUATION

Linking Teacher Evaluation, Professional Growth, and Motivation: A Multiple-Site Case Study

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Abstract

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the nature of the activities, processes, and structures used to link a teacher evaluation program to professional growth and motivation. A total of 52 teachers in the Johnson City School System were selected by both random and purposeful sampling techniques to participate. Data were collected through quantitative and qualitative methods. Principals of the 9 schools involved also participated in the naturalistic inquiry component of the study. Analysis of data revealed attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions of those involved in the implementation of a growth-oriented approach to teacher evaluation. The investigator identified 12 critical elements within 4 major categories that influence the linking of teacher evaluation, professional growth, and motivation. The 4 major categories are: characteristics of the culture, characteristics of the administrator, characteristics of the teacher, and characteristics of the process. The 12 critical elements were identified as follows: a culture that has a trusting environment, collaborative relationships, and high expectations of growth; administrators who are facilitators or coaches and resource providers; teachers who are mature, responsible, and self-directed; and a continuous process that is individualized, formative, and structured.

Linking Teacher Evaluation, Professional Growth, and Motivation: A Multiple-Site Case Study

Introduction

Findings from literature indicate that the field of supervision in public schools is in "a state of transition from a traditional view of supervision as a hierarchical construct, to a more democratic, or horizontal, notion of supervision" (Poole, 1994, p. 284). Such a shift has enacted what Poole (1994) identifies as two basic approaches to supervision. The "neo-progressive" supervisor focuses on reflective, collegial, and professional aspects, with a main goal of developing deliberative classrooms that encourage teachers and students to construct meaning from their interactions and investigations. On the other hand, supervisors with a "neo-traditionalist" focus support teacher behaviors that are thought to enhance student learning. In this approach, the coaching of teachers to encourage them to display these behaviors receives priority over identifying and solving actual problems of practice.

Due to the "Hunterization" of American schools in the 1980s through the use of Madeline Hunter's instructional model, clinical supervision focused more on a technological, hierarchical view of teaching and learning. The shift to a more collegial, reflective model of supervision is now apparent. Supervisors must assume that teachers have the ability and desire to unravel their own instructional dilemmas. The supervisor's role is to support challenging conditions that permit teachers

"to engage in reflective transformation of their classroom experience" (Poole, 1994, p. 287). Implementing a supportive supervision model allows teachers to be viewed as the expert who interprets and applies research-based knowledge to solve problems related to instructional practice (Poole, 1994).

According to Boyd (1989), effective evaluation systems provide: (a) teachers with useful feedback on classroom needs; (b) insights from which teachers develop new strategies; and (c) opportunities for coaching from principals and peers to suggest changes in the classroom. He suggests that specific procedures and standards must guide the evaluation process for it to be effective. The standards should be objective, be clearly communicated and reviewed, focus on important teaching skills, and be linked to the teacher's professional growth.

In linking evaluation to professional growth, principals should collaborate with teachers in setting specific, achievable goals. They should provide teachers with constructive feedback to improve weaknesses and amplify strengths. Peer and student evaluations can provide beneficial feedback to teachers as they seek to grow professionally.

Linking the evaluation process to professional growth requires that teachers engage in self-evaluation (Boyd, 1989). Reflective practice has become an area of great interest since 1983 with publication of The Reflective Practitioner by Donald Schon. Recognition of the importance of reflective practice can be traced to John Dewey in 1903 and is beginning to appear again

in much of the current literature. However, "its implications for teacher evaluation have not yet been appropriately explored in any detail" (Reagan, Case, Case, & Freiberg, 1993, p. 263).

How can teachers be motivated to seek and achieve instructional goals? Recent studies have shown that teachers are motivated more by intrinsic than extrinsic rewards. Results of a survey conducted by Pastor and Erlandson in 1982 showed that teachers have greater job satisfaction when they participate in decision making, use valued skills, have freedom and independence, are challenged, express creativity, and have opportunities for learning. Sergiovanni (in Ellis, 1985) found that teachers are motivated when they feel they have been successful in reaching and affecting students, when they receive recognition, and when they feel responsible. Haefele (1993) identified the following top five motivators of work performance: doing the job, liking the job, achieving success in doing the job, being recognized for doing the job, and moving upward as an indication of professional growth. These motivators have great relevance as stimulators of high performance for teachers.

Goal setting has an achievement orientation. Although not a panacea, goal setting is a very "effective motivational tool that can be used by any practicing manager" (Locke & Latham, 1984, p. 3). Teachers are motivated by the achievement or significant progress toward their individual goals. According to Haefele (1993), most teachers are motivated by the work itself. He also believes that responsibility is a powerful motivator of

performance. As a result of his research, Haefele (1993) suggests that emphasis be placed on the formative purposes of evaluation, motivation, and development. He considers goal setting one of the most important steps in the teacher evaluation process.

Statement of the Problem

Experienced teachers often state that evaluations are not productive. One contributing factor to their perception is the lack of a clear link between teacher evaluation and teacher development. For the evaluation process to be a positive experience for teachers and administrators, it must be meaningful, and not just an empty, disconnected exercise (Boyd, 1989).

Very little has been done in developing collaborative, growth-oriented approaches to evaluation. According to Reagan and others (1993), the "growing popularity of reflective practice as a goal for teachers will require a reexamination and reconceptualization of the ways in which teachers are evaluated" (p.276). They believe that a more qualitatively oriented approach to evaluation should be utilized to evaluate reflective teaching. They indicated that this type of model does not exist; they propose, however, that it is "time for its genesis" (Reagan, et al, 1993, p. 276).

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study was to conduct an investigation of the implementation of teacher evaluation focusing on the internal dynamics and actual processes. A secondary purpose of the study was to assess teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the State Model for Local Evaluation and the Professional Teacher Evaluation Model.

This study was conducted during the 1994-1995 school year. Analysis of the data included looking at activities and expected outcomes as well as informal patterns and unanticipated consequences. Results of the analysis were used in the refinement of the Professional Teacher Evaluation Model. With evidence of its effectiveness, the refined model was submitted for consideration as an option for tenured teachers in the Johnson City School System.

Significance of the Problem

The teacher evaluation process in Johnson City Schools has followed a traditional, competency-based model for a number of years. This highly structured process was designed to determine the extent to which teachers meet a specific level of competency. All teachers, apprentice, probationary, and all three levels of Career Ladder, have been evaluated using the same checklist and procedures. This model, with pre-conference, observation, and post-conference, attempts to combine formative and summative evaluation. However, there was no evidence that this checklist-driven model led to instructional improvement or to teacher

growth. Instead, it was used as a summative form of evaluation by rating teachers on how well they met the minimum competencies defined in the Tennessee Instructional Model (TIM).

Evaluation in the 1990s must have growth as its main purpose, rather than accountability. For teachers to grow and develop as professionals, they must become reflective practitioners (Marczely, 1992). Boyd (1989) and Poole (1994) express a need for a more formative form of evaluation that will promote professional growth, provide external data on teaching performance, be safe and non-threatening, and be directly tied to staff development (Boyd, 1989; Poole, 1994). Thomas McGreal (1994) calls for an evaluation model that "(1) provides a much softer image of its purpose; (2) offers opportunities to differentiate the process; (3) is more individually focused; (4) supports and encourages looking at teaching in richer ways; and (5) links evaluation and professional development closely" (p. 215).

The Professional Teacher Evaluation Model was developed for use in this study. This model for evaluation was designed to encourage reflective practice and to allow teachers to become self-directing, self-evaluating, and self-correcting. With this type of evaluation model, accountability can shift from meeting minimum competencies to being accountable for professional growth (Poole, 1994).

The ultimate goal of the evaluation process is to promote reflective practice that enhances teacher motivation and

professional growth. Through this new growth-oriented approach to evaluation, teachers engaged in reflective transformation of their classroom experiences. This study provided data to assist in the restructuring of teacher evaluation in the Johnson City School System. Conclusions drawn from the investigation provided a framework for enhancing the design of a formative evaluation process specifically for the professional teacher.

Limitations

The scope of this study is limited to the Johnson City School District or to a school district with similar characteristics. The target population is elementary and middle school teachers who were scheduled for evaluation during the 1994-1995 school year. This multiple-site case study employed the characteristics of naturalistic inquiry; therefore, generalization was not an important consideration.

The short period of time for this study, one-year, precluded the collection of long-term data. It is possible that participants who experienced low quality goal development and moderate effort at implementation could develop skills, if given the time, that would enhance their goal setting abilities and implementation process. Having a longer period of time for this study would also have allowed an opportunity to examine the impact on student learning and performance.

Research Procedures

The investigation was conducted in the Johnson City School System in Johnson City, Tennessee. A total of 52 tenured elementary and middle school teachers who were scheduled for evaluation during the 1994-95 school year participated in the study. The multiple-site case study consisted of four groups of teachers; North Side Elementary School (n=9), Liberty Bell Middle School (n=10), and experimental (n=17) and control groups (n=16) from the other seven elementary schools (see Table 1).

Table 1

Groups, Sample Size, and Evaluation Model

Group	Sample size	Evaluation model
Liberty Bell	n=10	Professional Teacher Evaluation Model
North Side	n=9	Professional Teacher Evaluation Model
Experimental	n=17	Professional Teacher Evaluation Model
Control	n=16	State Model for Local Evaluation

This investigation used a multiple-site case study approach that involved both qualitative and quantitative data. Program effects and implementation process case study approach was used to help determine the impact of teacher evaluation programs and to provide inferences about reasons for the successes or failures

of the programs. The Teacher Evaluation Profile (TEP) survey instrument was used to assess teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of two models of evaluation.

The control group was only involved in the quantitative component of the study. Teachers in this group were evaluated using the Tennessee State Model for Local Evaluation, which Johnson City Schools has used for a number of years. The other groups were evaluated using the newly developed Professional Teacher Evaluation Model. This new model of evaluation was designed to provide an opportunity for teachers to work collaboratively with principals in setting goals for improvement.

Through an existing procedure used by Johnson City Schools to rotate teachers through a ten year evaluation cycle, a total of 52 teachers were identified for the original sample. From this original sample, purposeful sampling was used to identify participants at North Side Elementary and Liberty Bell Middle School. The investigator used a stratified random sampling technique to form an experimental group and control group from the remaining seven elementary schools. Data were collected from all four groups from October, 1994 through May, 1995. However, the control group only participated in the experimental component of the study.

To provide for triangulation, the researcher decided to use multiple sources of data. Each participant responded to a pre- and post-survey. The data collected from this questionnaire were analyzed using various t-test and ANCOVA to determine teachers'

perceptions of the nature of the evaluation environment, the overall quality, and the impact on teaching performance. To provide additional data, the investigator conducted interviews and observations, and reviewed reflective journals and narrative reports. These qualitative data were analyzed using a computer software package, Ethnograph v4.0 (Seidel, J., Friese, S., & Leonard, D. C., 1995). Revision of the organization and categories was ongoing as new information was revealed. Both within-site analysis and cross-site analysis were conducted.

Trustworthiness was demonstrated by triangulation, referential adequacy, and member checks. Through an inquiry audit process, the auditor determined the credibility, dependability, and confirmability of the investigation.

Findings and Interpretations

Survey Results

The t-test for independent samples was used to compare pre-survey responses of the control group and experimental group. These responses reflected both groups' most recent experiences with the State Model for Local Evaluation. Only two items reflected significant differences: (a) the control group more strongly endorsed the standards of the evaluation and (b) the control group indicated they had received more specific feedback from administrators. There was no significant difference in their perception of the overall quality of the evaluation and its impact on their teaching performance.

Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to compare post-survey responses of the control and experimental group, while controlling for initial differences reflected on the pre-survey. Responses on the post-survey were based on the control group's experience with the State Model for Local Evaluation and the experimental group's experience with the Professional Teacher Evaluation Model. Five items reflected significant differences: (a) experimental group - described procedures as being more tailored, (b) experimental group -- described intended role as being more for professional growth, (c) control group -- reported more extensive use of classroom observations as a source of data for the evaluation, (d) control group -- reported more formal observations, (e) control group -- reported more frequent informal observations.

Although the experimental group rated the overall quality of the evaluation higher than did the control group, the difference in perceptions was not significant. However, the experimental group's perception of the impact of the evaluation on teaching performance was significantly higher than that of the control group.

A t-test for dependent samples was used to compare responses on the TEP instrument given before and after participation in the Professional Teacher Evaluation Model. For the Liberty Bell group, four items showed a significant difference: (a) the evaluator was perceived as being more credible, (b) the evaluator was perceived as giving more useful feedback, (c) the standards

were tailored for individual teachers, and (d) more time was provided for professional development (see table 2).

Table 2

Results of t-test for Dependent Samples Showing Comparisons of Pre-Survey and Post-Survey Responses for the Liberty Bell Group

Attribute	Item	n	Pre M	Post M	t	df	p
Evaluator	Credibility	10	4.20	4.70	-3.00	9	.015*
Evaluator	Usefulness of info.	10	3.10	4.10	-2.37	9	.042*
Procedures	Standards tailored	10	2.10	3.70	-2.75	9	.022*
Context	Time for prof. dev.	10	1.90	2.80	-2.59	9	.029*

*$p < .05$

For the North Side group, two areas showed significant differences: (a) class records were not used as extensively as a source of data for the evaluation, and (b) there were fewer formal observations (see table 3).

Table 3

Results of t-test for Dependent Samples Showing Comparisons of Pre-Survey and Post-Survey Responses for the North Side Group

Attribute	Item	n	Pre M	Post M	t	df	p
Procedures	Use of class records	9	3.33	2.33	2.68	8	.028*
Procedures	# of Formal observ.	9	2.89	1.78	4.26	8	.003*

*$p < .05$

In the experimental group, 12 items reflected a significant difference: (a) teachers were more oriented toward change, (b) evaluators were perceived as being more credible, (c) evaluators were perceived as being more flexible, (d) standards were better communicated, (e) standards were more strongly endorsed, (f) standards were tailored to meet individual needs, (g) feedback was more specific, (h) more time was allotted for professional development, (i) evaluation policies were clear, (j) the intended role of the evaluation was more for professional growth, (k) classroom observations were used less as a source of data for the evaluation, (l) fewer formal classroom observations were conducted (see table 4).

All three groups had improved perceptions of the evaluation process after participating in the Professional Teacher Evaluation Model. The Liberty Bell group and the experimental group showed significant differences in both the overall quality of the evaluation and its impact on teaching performance. However the differences in perceptions of the North Side group, concerning the impact on teaching performance, were not statistically significant.

A t-test for dependent samples was also conducted using data from the pre- and post-survey for the control group. The responses of the control group reflect their perceptions of the State Model for Local Evaluation. The difference in perceptions was not significantly different for any item.

Table 4

Results of t-test for Dependent Samples Showing Comparisons of Pre- and Post-Survey Responses for the Experimental Group

Attribute	Item	n	Pre M	Post M	t	df	p
Teacher	Orientation to change	17	3.35	3.88	-4.24	16	.001*
Evaluator	Credibility	17	3.71	4.41	-2.78	16	.013*
Evaluator	Flexibility	17	3.65	4.35	-3.77	16	.002*
Procedures	Standards communicated	17	3.24	3.82	-2.42	16	.028*
Procedures	Standards endorsed	17	3.12	4.47	-5.60	16	.000*
Procedures	Tailored standards	17	2.41	4.41	-5.09	16	.000*
Procedures	Observation classroom	17	4.59	3.00	4.48	16	.000*
Procedures	# of formal observations	17	2.76	2.06	2.51	16	.023*
Feedback	Specificity information	17	2.71	3.65	-2.89	16	.011*
Context	Time for prof. dev.	17	1.35	2.41	-4.24	16	.001*
Context	Clarity of policy	17	2.88	4.12	-4.24	16	.001*
Context	Intended role	17	2.12	4.18	-5.18	16	.000*

*$p < .05$

Qualitative Results

Three groups of teachers and principals from Liberty Bell Middle School, North Side Elementary School, and the experimental group participated in interviews. Data were collected through

field observations, transcripts of interviews, informal conversations, reflective journals, and narrative reports.

Through analysis of this qualitative data, the investigator summarized predominant behaviors, attitudes, and perceptions of participants during the pilot of the Professional Teacher Evaluation Model. The following issues emerged from interviews: (a) teachers expressed a need for structure and frequent interaction with principals (professional dialogue and feedback), (b) ownership produced motivation, and (c) an increase in knowledge and skills was experienced with successful implementation of the model.

Several critical elements influencing the linking of teacher evaluation, professional growth, and motivation emerged as the investigator conducted the data analysis using the Ethnograph v4.0 software package (Seidel, Friese, & Leonard, 1995). These critical elements fell into four major categories: (a) characteristics of the school culture, (b) characteristics of the administrator, (c) characteristics of the teacher, and (d) characteristics of the process. The level of success of the evaluation program varied among the groups involved and was directly related to the extent to which the critical elements were present (see Figure 1).

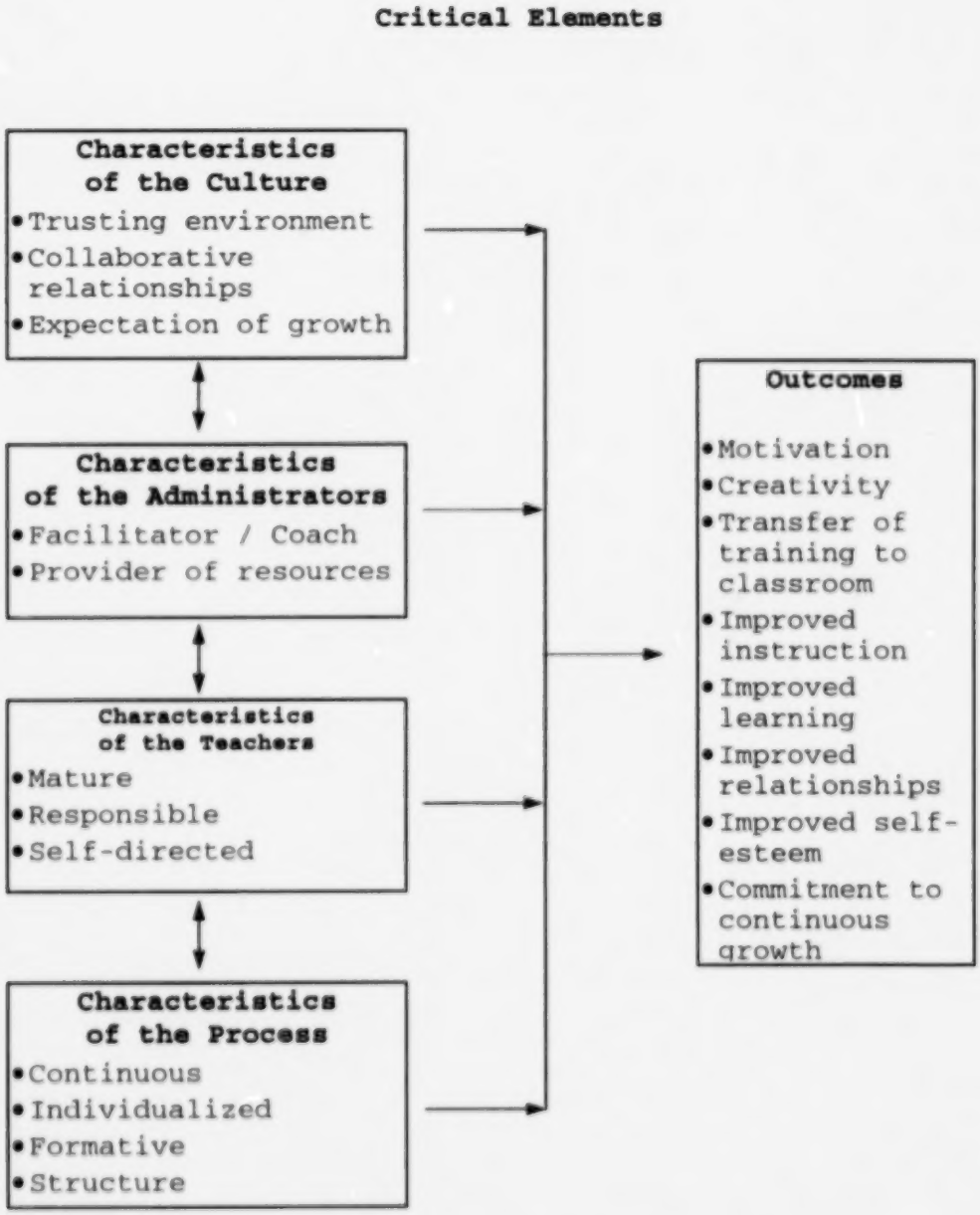

Figure 1. Critical elements influencing linkages between teacher evaluation, professional growth, and motivation.

Conclusions

This multiple-site case study was conducted to investigate the nature of the activities, processes, and structures used to link a teacher evaluation program to professional growth, and motivation. The findings from this study supported previous research and current literature concerning implementation of effective growth-oriented approaches to evaluation (Barth, 1993; Boyd, 1989; Cunningham & Gresso, 1993; Hill, 1991; Johnson, 1992; McGreal, 1994; Root & Overly, 1990). Based on the findings, the investigator reached the following conclusions:

1. The culture of the school has a great impact on the effectiveness of a growth-oriented approach to evaluation. With a trusting environment, collaborative relationships, and high expectations for growth, teachers and administrators will feel comfortable in revealing, sharing, and celebrating what works for them. This type of culture will foster reflective practice and contribute to teachers' and principals' capacity for growth.

2. The administrator plays a very important role as facilitator/coach and resource provider in the evaluation process. Another important function is that of identifying teachers' levels of readiness for self-directed learning and making adjustments in the process accordingly.

3. The greatest amounts of teacher growth and motivation were experienced by teachers who had frequent interactions with the principal and were supported and encouraged by the principal.

Informal classroom observations and opportunities for professional dialogue with the principal should be encouraged.

4. Both principals and teachers can contribute to a school culture that supports professional development by working together collaboratively to build trusting relationships that encourage risk-taking and creativity.

5. The more mature, responsible, and self-directed a teacher, the more likely there will be a level of comfort with the freedom to self-evaluate and self-correct.

6. Teachers should be involved in the development of the evaluation process under which they will be evaluated. Ownership is an important motivator.

7. Teachers consider the structure of the evaluation program and the guidance and support of the principal as key attributes for a successful evaluation program that promotes professional growth. However, due to the varying levels of teacher readiness for self-directed learning, flexibility should be an important consideration.

8. The evaluation process can enhance professional growth by being individualized and allowing teachers to choose areas of interest to work on.

9. Making a clear link between evaluation and professional development creates meaningful learning opportunities for principals and teachers.

10. The goal setting process with periodic reviews of progress inspired reflective practice. Teachers began to think deeply about what they were doing and why.

11. Principals should have the authority to use a more direct approach to evaluation with teachers who have demonstrated low levels of competency.

12. When the critical elements were present, the Professional Teacher Evaluation Model enhanced professional growth and had a positive impact on teacher motivation. The degree of success was directly related to the characteristics of the culture, the administrator, the teacher, and the process.

The investigator began this research project due to a strong commitment to the concept of linking teacher evaluation to professional growth to produce highly motivated teachers, improved teaching performance, and improved student learning. As a result of past experiences and information gained through reading current literature on evaluation and growth, the investigator expected to find the following: enthusiasm, motivation, growth, interest, improved relationships, improved instruction, and improved student learning. These outcomes were found in cases where the critical elements were present. The investigator, however, did not expect to find: (a) the need for more structure, (b) the need for training in goal setting, (c) the desire of some teacher to have formal observations and feedback, nor (d) principals' concerns regarding the use of the Professional Teacher Evaluation Model with less competent or marginal teachers.

Recommendations

Based on the findings from this study, the following recommendations are suggested for revising and implementing the Professional Teacher Evaluation Model.

1. The culture of the school should be assessed before implementation of the Professional Teacher Evaluation Model, to determine the level of trust and collaboration in the environment. When necessary, steps should be taken to develop a culture supportative of growth and development.

2. Prior to implementation, teachers and principals should be trained in the purpose and procedures of the evaluation program. Expectations and specific roles and responsibilities of administrators and teachers should be clarified. Having a clear understanding of these factors will help build a trusting environment and collaborative relationships.

3. Provide the opportunity to be involved in a professional growth evaluation model to all tenured teachers who desire the growth-oriented approach.

4. Principals should explore methods of identifying teachers' levels of readiness for self-directed learning. Once these readiness levels are identified, modifications and adjustments should be made in the structure of the process to meet the individual needs of the teachers.

5. Although the major responsibility is on the teacher to set challenging goals and develop action plans and activities for achieving those goals, it is recommended that principals take seriously their responsibility to provide frequent feedback and support. Informal classroom observations and opportunities for professional dialogue are recommended as integral parts of the evaluation process.

6. Every possible measure should be taken to ensure the presence of the 12 critical elements identified by the investigator as important to the success of a growth-oriented approach to evaluation.

7. The Professional Teacher Evaluation Model should be considered as the professional growth option component of the proposed Tennessee State Model for Local Evaluation that is being piloted during the 1995-96 school year.

Due to the qualitative nature of the study these results can not necessarily be generalized. However, since these findings are supported by previous research, the investigator believes that the 12 critical elements identified would be key factors determining the effectiveness of growth-oriented approaches to evaluation in other school systems.

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